

NEW MONTE IRVIN ORANGE PARK SOCCER FIELD OPENS

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The practice and procedure is similar to what cricket teams and leagues have to do for pitch time. Cricket, whose pitch is elsewhere on the park and soccer have been growing in popularity.

W. Payne - the freeholder's uncle - turned to his memories.

"There has been a soccer field for several decades here," said the former State Assemblyman and Newark Councilman. "I used to play pickup basketball and other games here."

Monte Irvin Orange Park, which was purchased for \$17,000 in 1899, was one on the earliest county parks in the nation. Its marshes were drained and landscaped by the Olmstead brothers - who also worked on Branch Brook and Central parks - and developed a 1.5-acre fishing pond.

The park was rededicated in Irvin's honor May 16, 2006. Irvin and his family lived across the street from the park while he played for the 1946 Negro League World Champion Newark Eagles and with 1951 Major League Baseball National League Pennant winning New York Giants.

The soccer field and renaming to honor Irvin are two of the park's latest redevelopments. Replacing playground equipment, building a new rest room field house and re-landscaping are among some \$3,050,153 of work put in by the county 2004-07. The north-south transverse road was closed to automotive traffic in 1986.



was young. I hope they can keep the condition up."

Most - but not all - of the dignitaries had left the 47.63-acre park for more air-conditioned environs. Donald Payne, Jr., William Payne and Al Prohite were still talking about the field they helped Essex County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo reopen about an hour before.

"I used to play soccer for Haiti some 25 years ago," said Prohite, from Essex County College's recreation department. "There are a lot

of people around here who play soccer. This will be Orange High School's home field."

The field, towards the park's south end, is within an eastern striker kick of the East Orange order. South Orange's border is within three blocks to the park's south.

D. Payne, wearing his Essex County Freeholder hat, talked about the restoration and over \$100,000 funding.

"One third of the money - about \$100,000 - came from the U.S. Soccer Foundation,"

said Payne. "Another third came from state Green Acres funding and the remainder from other grants. The field is of regulation size for the first time and replaces the grass field, that, in the last decade, had been worn out from heavy use."

The younger Payne added that those leagues and teams who want to use the new field would have to apply for a permit and schedule time on a calendar with Essex County Parks and Recreation.

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By Walter Elliott

ORANGE: Most of those who had celebrated the new soccer field's opening at Monte Irvin Orange Park here Aug. 10 had left when Richard Pryor was walking by. Pryor, of East Orange, paused to look at the ready-to-play regulation field, its artificial turf, goalie net cages, scoreboard, stands, security fence and plantings.

"I like it," said Pryor, who said he is related to the late namesake comic. "I used to play semi-pro soccer when I